By Moulana Mahmood Ashraf (A.R)

Error! Bookmark not defined.

The Status of Play, Sport and Recreation in the Light of the Shari'ah

Author's Forward

Islaam is that complete Deen (religion) that offers man comprehensive guidance in every facet of life. Together with providing a recipe to success in the Aakhirat (Hereafter), the guidance of the Shari'ah also gives due regard to man's welfare in this world. The pure teachings of Islaam encompass the fields of beliefs, acts of worship, social interaction, mutual dealings and good character. These teachings also include those delicate facets of man's life that are the focus of human inclinations. One of these focal facets is sport and entertainment.

In our present day climate of extremities, we will notice that the Western culture has transformed man's entire life into sport and amusement, while certain religious circles have propounded the philosophy that Islaam consists only of worship, fear and awe. They have made it appear as if Islaam does not play host to entertainment, happiness and gaiety. However, gaiety and mirth were also a part in the exemplary lives of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), the Sahaabah (R.A) and our pious predecessors (A.R).

With the Tawfeeq of Allaah, this lowly servant has had the good fortune of lecturing on this subject in the Jaamia Masjid of Daarul Uloom Islaamia in Lahore while teaching in the Jaamia Ashrafiyyah of Lahore. After moving to the Daarul Uloom of Karachi, I had the opportunity of writing a detailed Fatwaa on the subject. I am greatly reassured by the fact that this Fatwaa has been endorsed by many seniors. In the

preparation of the same, this lowly servant has received guidance from the eminent Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Muhammed Rafee Uthmaani (Daamat Barakaatuh) and the honourable Hadhrat Maulana Taqi Uthmaani (Daamat Barakaatuh). May Allaah grant them the best of rewards. Aameen.

This Fatwaa was published in four parts in the Karachi magazine "Al Balaagh". Al'hamdu Lillah, it proved beneficial to the readers. The same is now in book form before you. May Allaah make this publication a treasure in the Aakhirat (Hereafter) for this lowly servant and make it a means of Deen (religious) benefit to the readers; because nothing is difficult for Allaah.

Requesting your du'aas
Mahmood Ashraf (May Allaah forgive him).

All praises are for Allaah, the Rabb of the universe and may His choicest mercies and peace be on our leader Muhammed (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), his family and all his companions (R.A). Aameen.

Before understanding the status of sport and entertainment in Islaam, there are certain things that have to be borne in mind. Man's greatest capital are those fleeting moments of his life that will not halt by the stopping of anyone. These are speedily terminating in the form of seconds, minutes, hours and days. If man utilises these moments of his life fruitfully, he will attain success in this world and in the Aakhirat (Hereafter). If (Allaah forbid!) he wastes this precious time, he will have to suffer the ruin of both worlds. To emphasise the importance of time, an oath is taken by time in the Qur'aan. Allaah states in Surah Asr, **"By the oath of time! Verily man is at a loss.[1]"** {Surah 103, verses 1 and 2}

After expounding the details of this renowned Surah, Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R), makes the following comment in his commentary of the Qur'aan: "Allaah has given every person the most precious capital of time in his life. This capital will finance his business in which he will utilise his intelligence and senses to invest the capital in works that are lucrative and will yield unlimited profits. On the contrary, if he invests this capital in harmful works, he will not only suffer a loss, but he will even lose the capital. In addition to losing the profits and the capital, he will also have to suffer the punishment of thousands of sins. If a person neither invested this capital in good works nor in harmful works, he will still suffer the minimum damage of losing both the profits and capital.

---

[1] **The translation of the entire Surah is: "By the oath of time! Verily man is at a loss; except for those who believe, carry out righteous deeds, advise each other with the truth and advise each other with forbearance."**

This is not merely a poetical similitude, but is supported by a hadith of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) in which he said, "When people wake in the mornings, each one of them sells his soul. Some free their souls from harm, while others destroy their souls."

Even the Qur'aan has referred to Imaan and good deeds as a business investment in the following words of Surah Saff, **"O you who believe! Should I not direct you to a business that will save you from a painful punishment?"** {Surah 61, verse 10}

Mufti Shafee (A.R) writes further, "Therefore, man's lifespan is his capital and he is the trader. This trader is generally at a loss because the poor man's capital is not something solid which can be left unused for a few days and then used again afterwards. His capital is rather a flowing liquid that is flowing away every second. The trader has to be a astute and quick-witted to be able to derive a profit from a flowing commodity."

"It is for this reason that a saint narrates that he understood the meaning of Surah Asr when he visited the shop of a man selling ice. Should he be unmindful for a while, all his merchandise will be turn into water and be destroyed. The Qur'aan swears an oath by time to draw man's attention to the fact that he must not waste a second in exploiting the four acts prescribed in the Surah. He should realise the value of every passing minute and utilise it in these four acts." {Ma'aariful Qur'aan, Vol. 8 Pg. 812/3}

If we ignore the success of the Aakhirat (Hereafter) for a second (which is not really possible), we will realise that even the material gains of this world fall to the lot of people who utilise their time in good works and are cautious not to waste a moment of their lives. A person is regarded to be successful when he is serious about utilising his time in only the appropriate avenues and does not while it away in wasteful games and amusement.

This is the basic principle towards which the Qur'aan has drawn man's attention in numerous verses. The Qur'aan has also condemned those people who are negligent of the pertinent objectives of life and who transform their entire lives into a game and amusement.

Qur'aanic Verses Concerning Futility and Play

It is appropriate that certain verses of the Qur'aan are quoted here which make clear the Qur'aan's stance towards play and amusement.

1. **"There are some people who purchase futile discourse to deviate from Allaah's path without knowledge, making a joke of it (Allaah's path). There shall be an humiliating punishment for these people."** {Surah Luqmaan, verse 6}

2. **"So leave them to engage in talks and to play till they encounter the day that they have been promised."** {Surah Zukhruf, verse 83 and Surah Ma'aarij, verse 42}

3. **"If you have to ask them they will say, 'We were only talking and joking.' Say, 'Were you jeering at Allaah, His verses and His messenger?"** {Surah Taubah, verse 65}

4. **"Say, 'Allaah!' and then leave them to play in their absurdities."** {Surah An'aam, verse 91}

5. **"Or are the people of the towns secure against Our punishment afflicting them during midmorning while they are playing?"** {Surah A'raaf, verse 98}

6. **"They listen in jest to any new advice that comes to them from their Rabb while their hearts are heedless."** {Surah Ambiya, verses 2 and 3}

7. **"However, they are frolicking in their doubts."** {Surah Dukhaan, verse 9}

8. **"Destruction be on that day for the deniers who play around in their fabrications."** {Surah Toor, verse 12}

9. **“When you call them to salaah they make a mockery and sport thereof. That is because they are a nation who do not understand.”** {Surah Maa’idah, verse 58}

10. **“They said, ‘Do you bring us the truth or are you from those who play about?”** {Surah Ambiya, verse 55}

11. **“Forsake those who take their Deen (religion) as a play and sport, whom the worldly life has deceived and advise hereby (with the Qur'aan) so that no soul is apprehended by it’s deeds.”** {Surah An’aam, verse 70}

12. **“The life of the world is but play and sport and most certainly the home of the Aakhirat (Hereafter) is best for the abstinent ones. Do you not understand?”** {Surah An’aam, verse 32}

13. **“The life of this world is mere play and amusement. If you believe and fear Allaah, He will grant you, your rewards and will not ask for your wealth.”** {Surah Muhammed, verse 36}

14. **“The life of this world is mere futility and play. Without doubt, the life of the Aakhirat (Hereafter) is true life. If only they knew.”** {Surah Ankaboot, verse 64}

15. **“Say, ‘That which is with Allaah is better than play and trade. Allaah is the Best of providers.”** {Surah Jumu’ah, verse 11}

The Crux of these Qur'aanic Aayaat

Although most of the verses quoted above were revealed with specific reference to the kuffaar, the fact becomes evident that there exists a world of difference between a life with a purpose and a life based on play and amusement. The first type of lifestyle is what Islaam desires from a person, while Islaam condemns the second type. The first type of life takes the form of a Mu'min who possesses sound belief in the Aakhirat (Hereafter). The best examples of this were the first four righteous Khalifs of Islaam (Khulafaa Raashideen) and all the pious Muslims after them. On the other hand, the second type of life is the hallmark of the kuffaar and sinners. An example of this lifestyle may be

witnessed in the lives of people who are unmindful and without direction in life.

Islaam stresses that a Muslim leads a life that has a purpose, in which a person fully exploits the precious time available to him/her. Islaam emphasises that a person utilise his time in doing acts that guarantee benefit in both worlds; otherwise the act should at least not be of harm to one's existence in the two worlds. Consequently, when Allaah describes the sterling attributes of the Mu'mineen in Surah Mu'minoon, Allaah cites one of the descriptions of the successful Mu'mineen as, **"And those who are averse to futility**...**"** {Surah 23, verse 3}

In Surah Furqaan, Allaah describes His selected bondsmen in a similar verse when He says, **"when they pass by frivolous acts, they pass by gracefully."** {Surah 25, verse 72}

It is evident from these Aayaat that one of the salient features of an intelligent and exemplary Muslim is that they stay away from vain acts and everything that is superfluous and unnecessary. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned, "The intelligent person is the one who controls his Nafs (carnal self) and acts (in preparation) for the life after death. The foolish person is the one who allows his Nafs to pursue its whims and entertains hope in Allaah." {Mishkaat Pg. 451, from Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah}

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has also mentioned that the sign of beauty in a person's Islaam is that he forsakes futile activities. {Mishkaat Pg. 413, from Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi, Musnad of Ahmed and Mu'atta of Maalik}

Such futile activities are described as "play", "sport", "amusement", "futility" and "entertainment" in the Aayaat of the Qur'aan (these words in Arabic are "lahw", "la'ib" and "laghw"). These Arabic words will forthwith be explained.

"<u>Lahw</u>": This refers to everything that distracts man from acts that are of importance. {Mufarridaatul Qur'aan of Imaam Raaghib (A.R)}

"<u>La'ib</u>": This word (usually translated as "play") refers to carrying out an act that is bereft of any meaningful purpose. {Ibid}

"<u>Laghw</u>": This refers to every worthless utterance and every worthless act and includes music, "lahw" and everything similar. {Qurtubi, Vol.13 Pg.80}

<u>Permission in Islaam for Recreation</u>

Thus far, it has been established from the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth that the Shari'ah of Islaam emphasises safeguarding one's time and instructs man to make his life purposeful. He has been forbidden from acts that are classified as "lahw", "la'ib" and "laghw". However, this prohibition should never be misconstrued to mean that Islaam forbids all types of recreation and forms of relaxation. Islaam does not forbid all types of recreation.

In fact, it will not be wrong to state that Islaam actually encourages people to engage in those forms of recreation that will lend vigour and vibrancy to the body. The Shari'ah urges Muslims to adopt means whereby lethargy is dispelled from the body and it can regain the vitality to be active. When the body is revitalised and refreshed, it will be activated to pursue the objectives of life with fervour and enthusiasm. Of course, it is necessary that these forms of recreation serve the purpose of revitalising a person[2]. The lawful type of recreation is established from the exemplary lives of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) and the Sahaabah (R.A). Not only did Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) permit certain form of recreation, but he lauded them as acts of great reward because they are carried out with a

---

[2] **Allama Qurtubi (A.R) defines this acquired vigour as the pleasurable desire within the heart to accomplish something (Pg. 54). However, this pleasure is forbidden if it leads to boastfulness and revelry, as Allaah states in Surah Qasas, "Do not be boastful, for verily Allaah does not like the boastful"** {Surah 28, verse 76}. Allaah condemns man's ingratitude in verse 10 of Surah Hood where He states, **"Indeed he then becomes boastful and arrogant."** However, if this pleasurable desire does not lead to boastfulness and arrogance, it is liked by Allaah. Allaah states in Surah Yunus, **"Say, 'With the grace of Allaah and His mercy, with this you should take pleasure! This is better than what they accumulate"** {Surah 10, verse 58}. Describing the people of Jannah in a verse of Surah Aal Imraan, Allaah states, **"They derive pleasure from what their Rabb gives them from His bounty"** {Surah 3, verse 170}.

great objective in mind. The life of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) was filled with sacrifices, knowledge, practice, fear of Allaah, Dhikr, Jihaad, propagation and worship. Together with all of this, it is noticed that there he did occasionally engage in purposeful acts of recreation, as will be forthwith elucidated.

The Necessity of being Active and Agile

The reason for Islaam permitting various forms of recreation is that Islaam dislikes laziness and inactivity and urges people to be active and fresh. Islaam is a Deen (religion) that is suited to man's natural disposition and Allaah has revealed the injunctions of Islaam so that they suit his needs perfectly. Therefore, the teachings of the Shari'ah are practised with pleasure and not with reluctance and unhappiness. When a person's body is invigorated and active, it will be inspired to apply itself to the superior objectives of life.

We will now quote a few Qur'aanic verses and Ahadeeth which encourage an active nature and denounces laziness and lethargy.

1. **"Allaah has not placed any difficulty for you in Deen."** {Surah Ambiya, verse 78}

2. **"Allaah intends ease for you and does not desire difficulty for you."** {Surah Baqara, verse 185}

3. Once, on the day of Eid, some Abysinnians were demonstrating their skills in a game requiring talent with spears and shields. When they saw Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), they grew hesitant and began to shrink from their activity. When Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) noticed this, he said to them, "O Abysinnian boys! Continue so that the Jews and Christians may come to know that there is versatility in our Deen (religion)." {Jaami'us Sagheer}

4. According to other narrations, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) told them, "Continue playing because I do not like to see harshness in your Deen (religion)." {Jaami'us Sagheer, from Bayhaqi}

5. When Hadhrat Abu Bakr (R.A) wanted to stop a few girls from playing some game on the day of Eid, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) interjected by saying, "Leave them, O Abu Bakr! This is the day of Eid. The Jews should know that our Deen (religion) is one of versatility, for I have been sent with a Deen (religion) that is free from excesses and easy." {Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 15 Pg. 214, Musnad of Ahmed Vol. 6 Pg. 33}

6. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Refresh yourselves (by engaging in some recreation) now and then." {Ma'aariful Qur'aan Vol. 3 Pg. 195, from Jaami'us Sagheer}

7. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has also mentioned, "The heart grows weary just as the body grows weary, so seek the avenues of wisdom for this." {Ahkaamul Qur'aan of Mufti Shafee (A.R), Vol. 3 Pg. 195}

8. Hadhrat Ali (R.A) narrates that whenever Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) would notice any of the Sahaabah (R.A) in grief, he would cheer him up by telling him something amusing. It once occurred that Hadhrat Abu Bakr (R.A) cheered Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) up by relating to him an amusing incident that occurred to him [Hadhrat Abu Bakr (R.A)]. {Mirqaat Vol. 1 Pg. 268]

9. A Sahaabi (R.A) narrates that they were once sitting together when Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) arrived with traces of water on his hair. The Sahaabah (R.A) commented, "You seem very happy today, O Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam)!" "Yes indeed," came the reply. The Sahaabah (R.A) then began to discuss whether wealth was beneficial or not. Thereupon, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) commented, "There is no harm in wealth for the person who fears Allaah, but this person realises that good health is better than wealth. Being happy is one of the very special bounties from Allaah's bounties." {Fat'hul Mulhim Vol. 1 Pg. 175}

10. Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) reports that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The strong Mu'min is better than and more beloved to Allaah than the weak Mu'min. Otherwise, they are both

equal. Aspire for that which is of benefit to you, continue seeking Allaah’s assistance and never be helpless.” {Musnad of Ahmed}

11. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) used to make the following du’aa, “O Allaah! I seek refuge with You from helplessness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness and old age.” {Muslim}

These narrations teach us that Islaam advocates being happy, active and energetic, while it frowns on being morose and lethargic. Therefore, the Shari'ah permits certain suitable types of games and sport. The details of this will follow, Insha Allaah.

Forms of Recreation Encouraged in the Ahadeeth

Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, the Musnad of Ahmed and Ibn Khuzayma have all narrated the famous hadith in which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Every game of man's is useless except (1) archery, (2) training his horse and (3) playing with one's wife. These (three) are true (i.e. beneficial)."

This hadith is narrated in "Kanzul Ummaal" with the following words, "The angels of mercy do not descend for any form of sport except three; (1) a husband's playing with his wife, (2) racing one's horse (in training for Jihaad) and (3) archery." {Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 15 Pg. 414}

"Kanzul Ummaal" (Vol. 15 Pg. 211) and "Jaami'us Sagheer" (Vol. 5 Pg. 23) both narrate another hadith in which four types of sport are mentioned. The narration is as follows, "Everything that is not associated with Allaah's remembrance is "lahw" and "la'ib"[3] except four (viz.) (1) a husband playing with his wife, (2) training one's horse, (3) running between two targets (when practising archery or when racing) and (4) teaching (and learning) to swim."

While the above narrations of Ahadeeth cite a few examples of fruitful sports, other Ahadeeth provide further details and also cite other examples. It is now appropriate that we shed more light on each of these forms of recreation.

(1) Target Practice

The first sport that the Shari'ah encourages is archery. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned great rewards for learning archery because together with making the body agile, strengthening the muscles and sharpening the eyesight, it is of use at times of danger and especially at times of Jihaad. Allaah expressly commands the Muslims in

[3] **See the explanation of these two words as given in the preceding pages of this book.**

the Surah Anfaal saying, **"Prepare for them (the enemy) with whatever forces of strength you can muster"** {Surah 8, verse 60}.

In a hadith of Muslim, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) defined the word "quwwa" (translated above as **"forces of strength"**) as archery. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) told the Sahaabah (R.A), "Behold! Quwwa is "ramy"! Behold! Quwwa is "ramy"! Behold! Quwwa is "ramy"!" The Arabic word "ramy" literally means 'to throw' and is commonly used for archery. However, the broad context of the word also includes shooting bullets, rockets, missiles and throwing bombs. The practice required for all of these activities are also an excellent form of exercise to tone and strengthen the body. Such practice will also earn a person tremendous rewards from Allaah. {Badhlul Majhood Vol. 11 Pg. 428}

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned, "Verily, Allaah admits three people into Jannah because of one arrow. The first is the person who makes the arrow when he intends to gain reward from Allaah. The second is the person who fires the arrow and the third is the one who retrieves the arrow. O people! Learn archery and learn to ride. However, I prefer that you learn archery to riding. Whoever forsakes archery after learning is guilty of showing ingratitude for a great bounty." {Mishkaat Pg. 337 from Daarmi}

The words of another hadith are: "Whoever forsakes target practice after learning it is not from amongst us." Another narration of the same hadith says that such a person has committed a sin. {Mishkaat Pg. 336 from Muslim}

In a hadith of Muslim, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said to the Sahaabah (R.A), "You (people) will conquer Rome and Allaah will suffice for you, against your enemies. Then too, none of you should ever forget to play with his arrows." {Ibid}

These Ahadeeth make it clear that the Shari'ah of Islaam encourages Muslims to engage in target practice and further compels them to continue practising so that the skill is never forgotten. It is however necessary that the target practice be useful and of help in Jihaad. The Ahadeeth have sternly prohibited target practice that is useless.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mughaffal (R.A) once prohibited a person from throwing pebbles at a target saying, "Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) forbade us from throwing pebbles because they can neither kill any prey nor can they injure an enemy. What they can do is break someone's tooth or rupture an eye." {Mishkaat Pg. 305 from Bukhari and Muslim}

Shooting with a catapult is also disliked on these grounds. It is merely a waste of time because nothing is achieved thereby. "Kanzul Ummaal" (Vol. 15 Pg. 222) reports the following narration from Hadhrat Hakeem bin Abbaad (A.R). He says, "When material commodities started becoming readily available to the Muslims and they began to grow fat, the first evils that crept into the society of Madinah was pigeon racing and shooting with catapults. This occurred during the Khilaafah of Hadhrat Uthmaan (R.A). Hadhrat Uthmaan (R.A) dispatched a person from the Banu Layth tribe as a governor to Madinah with explicit instructions to clip the wings of the pigeons and to break all catapults."

The Shari'ah therefore allows only that target practice which will be useful in Jihaad. By the same token, using a rifle for hunting is a commendable sport if it is practised within the bounds of the Shari'ah.

(2) Riding

The next sport that the Shari'ah encourages is horse riding, which is an invaluable skill in Jihaad. Together with being an excellent form of physical exercise, horse riding also makes a person courageous, determined and high spirited. This practice is also invaluable during times of war and on journeys. Although the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth mention horse riding, it appears that all forms of conveyances are implied which prove useful during times of Jihaad.

Allaah says in Surah Anfaal, **"Prepare against them whatever forces of strength you can muster, and trained horses as well, wherewith you may strike fear into Allaah's enemies, your enemies and others besides them. You do not know them but Allaah knows them. Whatever you may spend in Allaah's way will be given to you in full and you will not be oppressed."** {Surah 8, verse 60}

Commenting on this verse, Hadhrat Mufti Muhammed Shafee (A.R) writes, "Horses have been specifically mentioned as imperative for battle preparations because they played a decisive role in military conquests during the time of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam). Nowadays there are also many regions of the world in which victory is impossible without horses. It is for this reason that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) mentioned, "Allaah has placed blessings in the foreheads of horses." {Ma'aariful Qur'aan Vol. 4 Pg. 336}

When horses are tamed, trained or exercised for the purpose of Jihaad, a person stands to reap tremendous rewards from Allaah. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) mentioned, "When a person has a horse tied in Allaah's path together with having Imaan in Allaah and fulfilling his pledge with Him, all the food and drink of the horse – even the urine and excrement of the horse – will lend weight to the person's scale of good deeds on the Day of Qiyaamah." {Mishkaat Pg. 336 from Bukhari}

In a hadith of Muslim, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has categorised horses into three types, expressing the differences between them. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Horses are of three types. (1) They are a means of gaining rewards for some, (2) a means of protection for some and (3) a misfortune for others."

(1) That horse will earn a person great rewards when he keeps it ready to be utilised in Allaah's path. Allaah will record rewards in the favour of this person equal to whatever he fills into the belly of this horse. If he grazes the horse in a green field, Allaah will record rewards in his favour to the extent of whatever the horse eats. If he takes the horse to drink from a river, he will be rewarded for every drop of water that enters the horse's belly. He will also be rewarded for the excrement and urine that the horse passes. If the horse gallops around one or two hills, the owner will be rewarded every time the horse raises a foot.

(2) That horse will be a means of protection for a person, which he rears because it is a means of maintaining his honour and to express Allaah's bounty on him. However, he does not forget the rights on the horse's back and belly that are binding on him, even though he may be wealthy or poor.

(3) As for the horse that is a misfortune for the owner, it is that horse which a person rears so that he may boast, be haughty, proud and show off with it. Such a horse is really a calamity for the owner." {Muslim Vol. 7 Pg. 69}

There are numerous narration in the books of Ahadeeth that extol the virtues of rearing horses for Jihaad. Together with understanding the great rewards attained by this deed, these Ahadeeth also reveal that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) possessed in-depth knowledge about the types and attributes of horses. Although these Ahadeeth specifically mention the virtues of horses and emphasise the necessity of horse riding, one may draw the analogy that the same virtues will apply to all other conveyances that a person trains on with the intention of using them in Jihaad. Examples of these are piloting bomber planes, fighter aircraft[4], helicopters, navigating marine vessels, driving tanks, armoured vehicles, off-road vehicles, cars, motorcycles, etc. When a Muslim trains on these vehicles and uses them with the correct intention, it will regarded as fruitful forms of recreation when carried out within the bounds of Shari'ah.

(3) Swimming

The Ahadeeth have also lauded swimming. While it is an excellent form of physical exercise, it is an invaluable skill which can save the lives of others. It is also imperative during times of Jihaad because a soldier will have to pass rivers and fast-flowing rapids during the course of Jihaad.

---

[4] **It is appropriate to quote a hadith at this point in which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The best lifestyle is the lifestyle of that person who firmly holds on to the reins of his horse in Allaah's path and flies on its back. Whenever he hears a scream or danger warning from anywhere, he flies to the place seeking death in the places of killing." {Mishkaat Pg. 329 from Muslim}**

Seafaring is of vital importance in warfare, especially in today’s times when waterways and ports are considered to be of strategic military importance. Therefore, while swimming is of inestimable value to the Muslim youth’s physical health, it is an excellent preparation for Jihaad. It is for this reason that the Ahadeeth quoted earlier from “Kanzul Ummaal” and “Jaami’us Sagheer” contain such great rewards for learning to swim.

Another hadith quoted in the same two books of hadith relate that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, “The best form of recreation for the Mu'min is swimming and the best form of recreation for a woman is to spin yarn.” {Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 15 Pg. 211 and Jaami’us Sagheer Vol. 3 Pg. 488}

The Ahadeeth also confirm that the Sahaabah (R.A) used to compete with each other in swimming. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas (R.A) narrates that they were once in the state of Ihraam when Hadhrat Umar (R.A) called him saying, “Come! I want to challenge you in diving to see who can hold his breath longer.” {Awaariful Ma’aarif Pg. 144}

(4) Running

Another excellent form of exercise is running, either jogging or sprinting – according to a person’s capability. Even doctors and physicians recommend running. Islaam encourages running because it dispels lethargy and laziness which the Shari'ah abhors and from which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) sought Allaah’s refuge. Hadhrat Anas bin Maalik (R.A), Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) and Hadhrat Zaid bin Arqam (R.A) have all narrated Ahadeeth in which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) made the following du’aa: “O Allaah! I seek refuge with You from helplessness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness and old age.” {Mishkaat Pg. 216 from Bukhari and Muslim}

A person’s body becomes strong and healthy with running, thereby allowing him to have sufficient strength for Ibaadah (worship), Jihaad and being of service to others. In addition to this, it also dispels artificial parades of dignity that some people adopt. Furthermore, it develops an amicable and light-hearted atmosphere between people. The Sahaabah (R.A) therefore never hesitated in this matter. Consider the following narrations.

A) The renowned Sahaabi Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) was once asked whether the companions of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) used to laugh. In reply to this he said, "Yes, but Imaan was mightier than mountains in their hearts." Hadhrat Bilaal bin Sa'd (A.R) says, "I saw the Sahaabah (R.A) racing between markers, joking with each other and laughing. However, when night came they would become like monks." {Mishkaat Pg. 407}

B) Hadhrat Salma bin Akwa (R.A) narrates that an Ansaari youngster once accompanied them on a journey. The Ansaari was undefeated in a road race. On the return journey he announced, "Will anyone race me till Madinah? Is there anyone who will race?" Hadhrat Salma bin Akwa (R.A) said to him, "Do you not you respect any honourable person or fear any honourable person?" Turning to Hadhrat Salma bin Akwa (R.A), the Ansaari said, "I care for none after Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam)." Thereupon, Hadhrat Salma bin Akwa (R.A) said, "O Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam)! May my parents be sacrificed for you! Permit me to race him." Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) replied, "Fine, if you wish." Hadhrat Salma bin Akwa (R.A) then raced the youngster and beat him.

C) Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) narrates that Hadhrat Umar (R.A) once raced against Hadhrat Zubair bin Awwaam (R.A). When Hadhrat Zubair (R.A) won the race, he exclaimed, "By the Rabb of the Kaa'ba! I have won!" On another occasion, the two again raced each other, but it was Hadhrat Umar (R.A) who won this time. Hadhrat Umar (R.A) then used the same expression when he won by saying, By the Rabb of the Kaa'ba! I have won!" {Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 15 Pg. 224}

(5) The Playing of Husband and Wife

The Ahadeeth narrated earlier make it clear that it is not only permissible for a husband and wife to play with each other, but Allaah will reward this action very highly. There are various facets to married life. The Shari'ah has furnished detailed injunctions with regard to sexual relations between a couple and a separate book can be written on this subject. However, instead of shedding light on all the facets of married life, we will suffice to highlight only one aspect of married life described in the Ahadeeth. This aspect concerns the couple joking with each other, playing games together and lightening each other's spirits.

The Ahadeeth that follow will make it apparent that Islaam attaches great importance to the natural bond of love that exists between a married couple. This importance is because the pleasure and contentment derived from this lawful bond saves a person from adultery and casting lustful gazes at others. In this manner, it prepares them for the greater objectives of this world and the Aakhirat (Hereafter). In this way, they will both attain peace of mind and contentment of heart. The couple should amuse each other, fulfil each other's rights, keep each other happy and when they engage in foreplay with the intention of acquiring pious children, it will become an act of Ibaadah and Sadaqa instead of remaining a mere animal instinct. They will therefore be rewarded for the same.

1. Allaah says in the Surah Room, **"And from His signs is that He has created spouses for you from your own species so that you may find solace with her and He has placed love and mercy between you. There are certainly signs therein for people who contemplate."** {Surah 30, verse 21}

   Commenting on this verse, Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R) writes, "i.e. Allaah has created them (wives) so that you may attain comfort by going to her. If one has to ponder over all the needs man requires from a woman, one will realise that the objective of each of these is to acquire peace of mind and contentment of heart. Not only did Allaah create a formal and official bond between the married couple, but Allaah also imbued them with love and mercy for each other." {Ma'aariful Qur'aan Vol. 6 Pg. 736}

   After quoting this verse in his lengthy discourse titled "Nusratun Nisaa", Hadhrat Hakeemul Ummah Thanwi (A.R) mentions, "In brief, the function of women is that they should provide contentment for their husbands, to lend stability to them and keep them satisfied. Women are therefore required to provide solace for the man and not only to make rotis for him. I always say with regard to the part **"He has placed love and mercy between you"** that the time for love is during the days of youth when both are in their prime. The time for mercy comes when they have both grown old and weak."

2. Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Musnad of Ahmed, Sahih of Ibn Khuzayma and other books of Ahadeeth have all narrated the famous hadith in

which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Every game of man's is useless except (1) archery, (2) training his horse and (3) playing with one's wife. These (three) are true (i.e. beneficial)."

3. Asking Hadhrat Jaabir (R.A) why he had married a widow, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said to him, "Why did you not marry a virgin with whom you could play and who would have played with you; with whom you could have fun and who could have fun with you?"[5]

4. Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri (R.A) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Allaah certainly looks at the married couple with affection when the husband looks at the wife with affection and the wife looks at the husband with affection. When the husband holds his wife's hand with love, their sins are shed off from between their fingers." {Kanzul Ummaal, Vol. 16 Pg. 272}

5. "Kanzul Ummaal" also contains a hadith in which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Allaah loves that a husband plays with his wife, rewards them both for it and grants them Halaal sustenance because of the same."[6]

6. Hadhrat bin Abi Waqqaas (R.A) reports that the Prophet (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The matters of a Mu'min are unique. If any good comes to him, he praises Allaah and expresses gratitude. When any calamity befalls him, he still praises Allaah and exercises patience. Therefore, a Mu'min is rewarded for everything;

---

[5] **There are various narrations of this hadith found in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Nasa'ee, Daarmi, Musnad of Ahmed and other books of Ahadeeth.**

[6] **The authenticity of this narration has not been established, but the author of Kanzul Ummaal has narrated it from Ibn Adi and Ibn Laal.**

to the extent that a Mu'min husband is rewarded for even placing a morsel of food into his wife's mouth." {Mishkaat Pg. 151}

7. Hadhrat Abu Dharr Ghiffaari (R.A) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The reward of Sadaqa is attained very time a person utters "SubhaanAllaah" or "Al'hamdu Lillah" or "Allaahu Akbar!" or "Laa Ilaaha IllAllaah" or when he enjoins good or forbids evil. He will also attain the reward of Sadaqa when he cohabits with his wife." Astonished, someone asked, "O Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam)! Will any of us be rewarded for satisfying his lust with his wife?" Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) asked, "Don't you think that a person will be sinful if he satisfies his lust in a Haraam manner? Therefore, he will be rewarded for satisfying himself in a Halaal manner." {Mishkaat Pg. 168 from Muslim}

8. Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) says, "I swear by Allaah that I saw Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) standing by the door of my room while some Abysinnians were performing a spear demonstration in (the courtyard of) the masjid. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) screened me with his shawl and I watched the Abysinnians perform from between his ears and shoulders. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) remained standing for my sake until I returned inside the room by my own will. You can well judge for yourself how long a fascinated young girl must have stood watching some amusement!" {Mishkaat Pg. 280 from Bukhari and Muslim; also Vol. 6 Pg. 84 of the Musnad of Ahmed}

9. Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) relates that she was once on a journey with Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) when he ran a race with her and she won. After some time, when they embarked on another journey together, they raced again[7]. Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) says that by then she had gained weight and therefore lost the race.

---

[7] **It must be borne in mind that these races took place after Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) had commanded the rest of the caravan to proceed ahead and only him and Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) remained behind. Therefore, no person can use this hadith to substantiate taking walks or jogging in parks and streets with their wives exposing themselves in front of others.**

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) then said to her, "This is in return of the last time." {Mishkaat Pg. 281 from Abu Dawood; also Vol. 6 Pg. 39 and 264 of the Musnad of Ahmed}

10. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) once related an amusing story of ten Arab wives and their husbands to Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A). The hadith is lengthy and can be found in the books of Ahadeeth under the title "Hadith Ummu Zar". {Jam'ul Fawaaid from Bukhari, Muslim, and the Musnad of Ahmed}

11. Hadhrat Ibraheem Taymi (A.R) narrates that Hadhrat Umar (R.A) used to say that a man should act like a child with his wife. However, when the need arises, he should be a thoroughbred man." {Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 16 Pg. 573}

One can gauge from the foregoing Ahadeeth that the Shari'ah of Islaam attaches great importance to the fostering of a loving and amicable relationship between husband and wife. These Ahadeeth serve as a warning to those men who leave their wives at home and cast lustful glances at other women in shopping centres and parks. This often leads them to engage in illicit affairs which earn them the tormenting Fire of Jahannam. At the same time, these Ahadeeth strongly advise pious couples not to be too extreme when practising modesty between themselves because they would be destroying the solace and contentment that marriage provides for them.

One should take note that the deep relationship between husband and wife should never infringe upon the rights that one owes to Allaah and to others. In addition to this, these forms of recreation should remain as the leisure activities that they are and should never become the objective of a person's life. Most importantly, the forms of recreation that have been mentioned should never be an obstacle to the most important objectives of life like salaah, zakaah, Hajj, Jihaad, and propagating Islaam. The success of a Mu'min pivots on holding fast to the straight path and steering clear of excesses.

A Word of Caution

For one to avoid excesses, it is necessary for one to bear the following two points in mind.

The first is that love and kind treatment do not necessarily translate into subservience. If a person has love for his wife, it does not mean that he has to obey everything she says. Many Ahadeeth have explicitly forbidden men from this[8]. The Shari'ah has commanded women to obey their husbands to the best of their ability even though they may not understand the reason for the commands of their husbands.

The second point of importance is that men owe many other rights to their wives apart from playing with and amusing her. Examples of such rights are as Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) advised Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal (R.A) when he gave him ten pieces of advice. The last of these ten were: "Spend on your family according to your capacity, never spare the rod to discipline them and create the fear for Allaah within them."

Listening and Singing Beneficial Poems in One's Leisure Time

A) Hadhrat Amr bin Shareed (A.R) narrates from his father Hadhrat Shareed (R.A) that he was once accompanying Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) on a journey when Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) asked him whether he knew any of the Umayya bin Silt's poems. When he said that he knew some of Umayya's poetry, the Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) asked him

---

[8] Examples of such Ahadeeth are: Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The nation that hands over its affairs to a woman is certainly destroyed" {Mishkaat Pg. 321, from Bukhari}. A hadith of Tirmidhi reads: "When your affairs are handed over to your women then the belly of the earth is better for you" {Mishkaat Pg. 459}.

to recite the same. After he recited one poem, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) bade him to recite another. When he did this, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) asked him to recite a third. In this manner, he continued to recite poem after poem until he had recited a hundred poems. {Mishkaat Pg. 18, from the Musnad of Ahmed}

B) Hadhrat Baraa bin Aazib (R.A) reports that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) was reciting the following few couplets while digging the trench before the Battle of Khandaq:

TRANSLATION:

"By Allaah! Were it not for Allaah we would neither have been guided
Nor been able to give charity or perform salaah.

O Allaah! Send to us tranquillity
And make our feet steadfast when we meet the enemy.

These kuffaar have come to attack us
When they try to cast us into strife we will resist."

When Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) reached the final verse, he would raise his voice and repeat the words, "We will resist! We will resist!"

C) Hadhrat Khawwaat bin Hubayr (A.R) narrates that they once accompanied Hadhrat Umar (R.A) on a journey for Hajj. Amongst those travelling with the group were Hadhrat Abu Ubaida bin Jarraah (R.A) and Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan bin Awf (R.A) [both of whom were amongst the Ashara Mubasshara[9]]. En route the people requested Hadhrat Khawwaat (A.R) to sing some poems to them. When he began to sing, some people requested that he sing the poems of a poet named Darraar. Thereupon, Hadhrat Umar (R.A) said, "Let Khawwaat sing the sounds of his heart (i.e. the songs that he composed himself)." Consequently, Hadhrat Khawwaat (A.R) sang for them the entire night. When dawn approached, Hadhrat Umar

---

[9] **The ten Sahaabah (R.A) about whom Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) gave the glad tidings of Jannah in a single statement.**

(R.A) said, “You may hold your tongue now Khawwaat because the morning is beginning to arrive.” {Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 15 Pg. 228 and As Sunanul Kubra Vol. 10 Pg. 224}

D) After remaining engrossed in Qur'aan and Ahadeeth for a very long time, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas (R.A) would take a break by saying to his companions, “Let us change the flavour of our mouths.” They would then renew their vigour by exchanging news and reciting poetry. {Ahkaamul Qur'aan of Mufti Shafee (A.R), Vol.3 Pg.195}

E) Hadhrat Ibn Juraij (A.R) reports that he once asked Hadhrat Ataa bin Abi Rabaah (A.R) about poetry, to which the reply was, “I see no harm in it as long as the poetry is not immoral.” {As Sunanul Kubra Vol. 10 Pg. 225}

The above narrations make it clear that there is no harm in reciting/singing poems during one’s free time to lighten one’s spirits. In fact, the Shari'ah also permits undertaking a journey for the sake of a purposeful recreation. {Rafeeqe Safar by Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R)}

The Ruling of the Shari'ah Regarding the Forms of Recreation not Mentioned Above

Thusfar, mention has been made of all forms of recreation that have been specifically stated in the Ahadeeth. When these are carried out within the confines of Shari'ah, their permissibility cannot be questioned. However, the following guidelines should be borne in mind with regard to other forms of recreation.

1. There are certain types of recreation that have been explicitly forbidden in the Ahadeeth. These include chess, backgammon, pigeon racing and pitching animals to fight against each other.

2. If any form of recreation entails committing a sin, the recreation will itself become Haraam on account of the sin. This can adopt several forms; e.g. Those forms of recreation and sports:
   - In which one has to expose one’s “Satr” (i.e. those parts of the body that have to remain concealed).
   - In which gambling takes place.
   - In which males and females intermingle.

- ♉ In which music is played.
- ♉ In which one has to emulate the kuffaar.

6. It is not permissible to engage in any form of recreation that distracts a person from the Faraa'idh and Waajibaat because this will then be classified as "Lahw".[10]

7. It is not permissible to engage in act of recreation if there is no purpose behind it and it is merely carried out to pass time. It is not permissible because a person will then be guilty of wasting his precious time in an act of "Laghw". Allaah describes the successful Mu'mineen as **"those who are averse to futility...**" {Surah Mu'minoon (23), verse 3}.

There is no harm in engaging in those forms of recreation that do not fall into the above categories. This is evident from the following statements of the eminent Fuqahaa (jurists) and Muhadditheen.

Citations from the Works of Eminent Jurists and Muhadditheen

---

[10] **Imaam Bukhari (A.R) has titled a chapter as "Every Lahw is useless (sinful) when it distracts one from Allaah's obedience". Commenting on this chapter, Haafidh Ibn Hajar (A.R) writes, "This occurs when a person becomes so preoccupied with an act that he becomes negligent (of the Faraa'idh) – even though the Shari'ah usually permits the act. For example, if a person becomes so engrossed with performing Nafl salaah, reciting the Qur'aan, making Dhikr or pondering over the meanings of the Qur'aan that the time for a Fardh salaah expires without his performing the salaah, then this will apply to him as well (i.e. These acts of Ibaadah will also be classified as Lahw). If this is the case with acts of Ibaadah that the Shari'ah encourages and the virtues of which are extolled, then one can well imagine what the status will be of those acts that are of a less importance!" Therefore, acts that the Shari'ah has merely permitted (not encouraged) will definitely be outlawed if they distract one from the Faraa'idh and/or Waajibaat. {Fat'hul Baari Vol. 11 Pg. 91}**

Commenting on the Ahadeeth that enumerate the certain forms of recreation, Mulla Ali Qaari (A.R) writes in his famous work “Mirqaat” (a commentary of Mishkaat): “Included in the purport of the types of recreation mentioned in the Ahadeeth are all other forms of recreation which are helpful in acquiring Islaamic knowledge and carrying out virtuous deeds. It is also necessary that the specific form of recreation entail activities that the Shari'ah permits. Examples of this are training horses and camels by racing them or taking a walk with the intention of strengthening the body and freshening the mind.” {Vol. 7 Pg. 318}

Allaama Ibnul Arabi (A.R) writes in his commentary of Tirmidhi: “This hadith strongly indicates that all forms of recreation are included in those that the Ahadeeth encourage when the benefit is guaranteed or it will serve as training to fight against the kuffaar in Jihaad. Examples of this are spear-throwing contests, training with shields and running contests like the race Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) ran against Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A).” {Aaridhul Ahwazi Vol. 7 Pg. 132}

Hadhrat Maulana Khaleel Ahmed Sahaaranpuri (A.R) writes in his commentary of Abu Dawood, “Archery was common during the time of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam). Nowadays, training on modern weaponry like guns and artillery will not only fall into the same category as archery, but will replace archery (as training for Jihaad). Imaam Nawawi (A.R) says that this hadith expresses the virtue of concentrating on target practice and archery as means of preparation for Jihaad in Allaah’s path. This applies to training with spears and all other weapons, as well as training with horses as mentioned earlier. All these forms of recreation have been permitted because they are a preparation for Jihaad, provide training with the weapons of Jihaad, facilitate proficiency in these skills and are effective means of physical exercise.” {Badhlul Majhood Vol. 11 Pg. 428}

Allaama Khattaabi (A.R) writes in "Ma'aalimus Sunan": “It appears from this hadith that all other types of recreation are forbidden and that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has only permitted these few types. These types have been permitted because one will realise that each one of them is either a good deed in itself or auxiliary to a good deed. However, also included in this category are all types of recreation that serve as physical exercises for the body and which allow a Muslim to ably fight the kuffaar, e.g. training on weapons, running races, etc. All types of frivolous recreation such as chess, backgammon and

pigeon-racing are forbidden because they are neither helpful in carrying out good deeds nor do they provide any stimulus for carrying out any compulsory acts." {Tahdheeb Imaam Ibn Qayyim Vol. 3 Pg. 321}

In his great Arabic work "Ahkaamul Qur'aan", Hadhrat Mufti Muhammed Shafee (A.R) has summarised the narrations of Ahadeeth and the citations of Ulema regarding this subject in the following words: "No former or latter-day Aalim has ever held the view that ***every type*** of sport and recreation is forbidden. The narrations of Ahadeeth either forbid recreation on a general basis or permit a few while forbidding the rest. If one scrutinises those types of recreation that the Shari'ah has permitted, one will realise that they have only been termed "Lahw" because of the resemblance they bear to "Lahw". In reality, they do not fall into the category of "Lahw" at all, as is evident from the following hadith of Abu Dawood, in which Hadhrat Uqba bin Aamir (R.A) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Three acts are not acts of Lahw." Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) then mentioned these three acts as target practice, training horses and playing with one's wife. How can these acts be classified as "Lahw" when "Lahw" essentially refers to an act that is useless and has no underlying purpose that is constructive? The forms of recreation mentioned in the Ahadeeth are of such a nature that their underlying objectives and benefits cannot be attained without them. It is for this reason that the jurists have made it clear that even the permissible forms of recreation are only permissible when the objective is correct. If they are carried out merely for the sake of amusement, they will also be forbidden. It is therefore Makrooh for a person to wrestle, swim, run or take part in target practice merely with the intention of play and sport." {Ahkaamul Qur'aan Vol. 3 Pg. 192}

Discussing the same issue in his tafseer "Ma'aariful Qur'aan", Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R) writes, "It has already been discussed in detail earlier that all forms of recreation that have no purposeful worldly or religious objectives are forbidden. A form of recreation is permissible when it is carried out to preserve one's physical health or for any other purposeful religious or worldly objective; even though it is merely to eradicate lethargy. However, the condition for permissibility is that one should not be excessive when engaging in the recreation by making it a profession or regarding it as a compulsion. In fact, if such a recreation is practised to fulfil a religious need, one will be rewarded for the act."

Thereafter, after citing many examples of permissibility, Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R) continues, "Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned in a hadith: 'Refresh yourselves (by engaging in some recreation) now and then[11].' This hadith establishes that it is permissible to devote some time to recreation whereby the heart and mind are rejuvenated. The precondition for this permissibility is that a person's intentions and objectives for engaging in the particular form of recreation have to be correct. One must never engage in any form of recreation merely for the sake of play and sport. It is also imperative that a person only carries out the activity when the need arises and that he never sways to extremes."

"The reason for certain forms of recreation being permissible is that they do not fall into the category of "Lahw" when they are carried out within limits. There are also those forms of recreation which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has clearly forbidden even though they my have some benefit. Examples of these are chess and backgammon. If these games are played for money, there is no doubt about them being Haraam because they then assume the form of gambling. The Ahadeeth also forbid these games when they are played merely for leisure. Muslim narrates from Hadhrat Buraydah (R.A) that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, 'The person who plays backgammon is like one who colours his hands in the blood of a pig.' In another hadith, people who play chess are cursed. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has also forbidden pigeon-racing[12]. The apparent reason for this prohibition is that these activities make a person so preoccupied that one becomes negligent of binding duties like salaah and other acts of worship." {Ma'aariful Qur'aan Vol. 7 Pg. 23/4/5}

A Pivotal Ruling about Recreation

In a detailed Fatwaa, the Grand Mufti of Pakistan Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R) addressed the issue of recreation, quoting extensively from the Qur'aan, the Ahadeeth and the words of the Fuqahaa (jurists). After quoting excerpts from Vol. 6 Pg. 395 and 404 of "Shaami" (new

---

[11] **Narrated by Abu Dawood in his Maraaseel.**
[12] **Narrated in Kanzul Ummaal from the Maraaseel of Abu Dawood.**

edition), he wrote, "The following details emerge from the Ahadeeth quoted and above and citations of the Fuqahaa:

1. Any form of recreation that has no purposeful worldly or religious objectives is not permissible. This is what the hadith refers to.

2. A form of recreation is permissible if it has a feasible worldly or religious objective. However, the precondition is that it should not entail anything that contravenes the Shari'ah or anything that is an emulation of the kuffaar.

3. When a form of recreation entails any act that contravenes the Shari'ah, it will not be permissible even though the particular form of recreation will directly benefit a person's worldly or spiritual lives. An example of this is an archery contest or a horse race which assumes the form of gambling when each of the contestants stakes a bet and will take the money of his opponent if he wins (it is also Haraam when other people stake bets on the winner). It is also not permissible to engage in any form of recreation that is exclusively taught by a particular kuffaar nation.

Therefore, a ball game like cricket or any other sport will be permissible to play because they reinvigorate a person, are a good form of exercise and give the body stamina; all of which are vital worldly benefits and are also a means to attain religious benefits. Of course, the precondition for this permissibility is that the activity should not entail anything that contravenes the Shari'ah and one should not be emulating the kuffaar when engaged in it. One's dressing should not be Western, the knees should not be exposed and the activity should not be an obstacle for the fundamentals of Islaam such as salaah. A person is permitted to play sports like cricket, tennis, etc if the above preconditions are observed. If these conditions are not followed, it will not be permissible to play any sport. Since these conditions are generally ignored in today's sports, these sports are regarded as impermissible." {Imdaadul Muftiyyeen Pg. 1001/2}

A Brief Analysis of Contemporary Sports

The permissibility of any sport can be determined by what has been discussed above. Almost all sports played nowadays are fraught with the following evils:

A) These sports are themselves regarded as objectives. According to the Shari'ah as well as from a logical point of view, the concept of regarding a sport as an objective instead of a form of recreation is absurd and detestable.

B) The preoccupation of players and spectators is so intense that they give preference to these sports over other necessary duties. At times they also trample upon the rights of other people in their preoccupation.

C) It is commonly observed that people involved in sports are not even cognisant of the times of Fardh salaah, the auspicious day of Jumu'ah and the fasts of the month of Ramadhaan – even though it is obligatory for every Muslim to be aware of these occasions.

D) It is generally expensive to play many sports. Consequently, only the rich and their children are able to afford playing these sports as they should be played. The poor are forced to be envious spectators while the middle-class have to endure heavy expenses to afford participation. This then leads them to be extravagant.

E) These sports are usually time consuming and the huge amount of constructive national time that is wasted in sport is a major concern for the thinking people of any nation.

F) Another major concern for people of insight is the fact that sportsmen and sportswomen receive extensive publicity and enjoy the status of being national heroes. As a result, instead of revering Mujaahideen, Ulema, scientists and people who render services to their countries, the nation begin to idolise sports figures.

G) Concealment of the "Satar" is not given importance in most sports i.e. sportsmen and sportswomen generally do not cover those parts of the body which the Shari'ah requires them to keep covered at all times. It is not permissible for a man to wear any clothing that does not conceal the part of the body from the navel to the knees. The

"Satar" for women is the entire body, which means that no part of her body should be exposed to the public.

H) Sports almost always entails intermingling of the sexes. Because men and women only gather at sports functions for amusement, music, dancing and other immoral and licentious acts must take place. It is for this reason that a respectable person will be placing his honour in jeopardy by attending sporting events.

I) Whereas sport was originally intended to be a form of recreation, it has now become a physical and mental warfront and the sports fields have now become battlefields. The objective of these sports has thus been lost. Nowadays, a sporting victory is regarded as a national victory and a defeat is a national defeat. Many Muslims make du'aas for matches and take vows for the same just as other Muslims do for the freedom of Baytul Muqaddas and Kashmir. Heads of state even officially congratulate and console sports teams after matches.

Nowadays we even hear that being a spectator at certain sporting events is a risk for people suffering from high blood pressure and heart diseases. In fact, people often die of heart attacks while watching matches! One should now carefully evaluate how far sports have digressed from their objective because the limits of the Shari'ah were transgressed.

J) Gambling often takes place during sporting events when people place bets on certain teams. Millions are wasted in various currencies. Besides the money-spinning bookmakers, spectators in various towns and houses also take bets and unknowingly involve themselves in gambling. They then become guilty of a major sin which has been strongly condemned in the Qur'aan.

Some Popular Sports

(1) Cricket

Cricket is the most popular sport in our (Indo-Pak) subcontinent. The money and time invested in this sport are substantial. A test match usually lasts for five days and the result of the match is often not conclusive. There are really only two players in a cricket match – the bowler who throws a ball and the batsmen who tries to score runs. The rest of the "players" are either sitting in the pavilion (often never getting a chance to bat) or fielding. After exerting themselves on the field the entire day, the players return exhausted and are then unable to tend to the more important worldly and religious matters. Only Allaah knows who named this exhaustive effort as a recreation! Cricket is an extremely time intensive sport and it is perhaps for this reason that it has not caught on well in the Pakistan army.

Day-night cricket matches have now become very popular and most of these matches are played on a Friday. As a result, the entire blessed day of Jumu'ah is wasted in play and commotion. Play continues during the time of Jumu'ah salaah and it is not only the players who miss their Jumu'ah salaah, but thousands of Muslim spectators as well; thereby destroying their lives in the Aakhirat (Hereafter).

(2) Hockey, Soccer, Volleyball, Tennis, Badminton and Table Tennis

Less money and time is squandered in these sports as compared to cricket. These sports provide good exercise and generally all the players actively participate simultaneously. These sports are an excellent form of recreation which can be played in an hour or an hour-and-a-half and can be started after Asr salaah to finish off before the Maghrib adhaan. If players are careful to cover their "Satar" and to avoid the associated evils mentioned earlier, these sports are beneficial for the body and permissible to play.

A Further Analysis of a Few Specific Forms of Recreation

(1) Backgammon

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has forbidden this game in the Ahadeeth. He said, "The person who plays backgammon is like one who colours his hands in the flesh and blood of a pig." {Mishkaat Pg. 386, from Muslim}

According to another hadith, Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The person who plays backgammon has disobeyed Allaah and His Rasul (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam)." {Mishkaat Pg. 386, from the Musnad of Ahmed and Abu Dawood}

(2) Chess

The Sahaabah (R.A) strongly opposed playing chess and it is obvious that they learned of its prohibition from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam). Hadhrat Ali (R.A) said, "Chess is the gambling of the non-Arabs." {Mishkaat Pg. 387, from Bayhaqi}
Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari (R.A) said, "Chess is the game of sinners." {Ibid}

When someone once asked Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari (R.A) about chess, he replied, "It is amongst the things of falsehood and Allaah does not like falsehood." {Ibid}

Based on these and other narrations, Hadhrat Imaam Abu Haneefa (A.R) and other jurists have forbidden chess.

(3) Pigeon-Racing

The Ahadeeth have prohibited pigeon-racing. Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) reports that when Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) once saw a person running after a pigeon he said, "One Shaytaan is running after another Shaytaan." {Mishkaat Pg. 386, from the Musnad of Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah and Bayhaqi}

In his book "Islaahur Rusoom", Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (A.R) has recorded the following evils associated with pigeon-racing:

1. Taking the pigeons belonging to others, which is theft and injustice.
2. People generally become so engrossed in the activity that they neglect their salaah and the rights they owe to others.
3. Since pigeon racers have to climb on their roofs, they invade the privacy of others, thereby inconveniencing their neighbours.
4. People hit the pigeons lightly, which obviously entails harming Allaah's creatures. {Pg. 16}

On account of these and other associated evils, law authorities have the right to slaughter the pigeons of pigeon racers if they refuse to desist from their sport[13]. This decision was passed by Hadhrat Uthmaan (R.A) during the period of his Khilaafah[14]. When the above evils are avoided, it is permissible to keep pigeons and other birds as pets so that children may develop affection. However, it is imperative that the cage be big enough and that the birds are well fed and well cared for.

(4) Cock-Fighting and Quail-Fighting

It is popular in many little villages of the world to pitch birds and animals to fight each other as a form of entertainment for people. Sometimes cocks are used, sometimes quails and other animals as well. Such practices are not permissible at all. Bets are placed on the winners, resulting in gambling. In addition to this, spectators miss their salaah, much swearing takes place and music is played. Even if these evils were not present, the act of pitching animals to fight each other is contrary to the clear instructions of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam).

Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood both report a hadith which reads: "Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) prohibited pitching animals to fight each other" {Mishkaat Pg. 359}.

Commenting on this hadith in his book "Jaanwaro ke Huqooq" ("The rights of animals"), Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (A.R) writes, "This includes cock-fighting, quail-fighting, goat-fighting and all other animal fights. These are all Haraam because they cause senseless harm

---

[13] **Shaami Vol. 6 Pg. 401**
[14] **Kanzul Ummaal Vol. 15 Pg. 222**

to animals. Another futile activity is bull racing in which bulls are made to run until they are panting with exhaustion and riders are also injured on many occasions. All that accrues from this pastime is boasting and rivalry. The same applies to other animal races except horse races when no gambling is involved. When horses are raced without the element of gambling, the exercise provides training (for Jihaad)." {Pg. 19}

(5) Kite-Flying

Kite-flying is customary during certain seasons in many places. In celebrating a festival, people squander thousands in this futile activity and competitions are hosted in many places as well. With substantiation from the Qur'aan, Ahadeeth and common sense, Hakeemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (A.R) has elucidated the evils associated with this pastime. Hereunder follows his exposition on the subject which we will render in our own words with a bit of addition and omission.

1. Running after the kite: The same rule will apply to this act as applies to running after a pigeon i.e. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has termed the person running after a pigeon as a Shaytaan[15].

2. Stealing another person's kite: A narration of Bukhari and Muslim quotes Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) as saying: "A person cannot remain a Mu'min after stealing an item from another in a way that people stare." Some people claim that they are not implied in this hadith because the owner of the other kite has permitted him to take the kite. This argument is baseless because the other person is clearly unhappy to lose his kite but merely concedes to it since he feels constrained to abide by custom.

3. Stealing another person's string: This is even worse than stealing a kite because many people take part in this sin whereas only one person will take the kite of another. The person flying the kite is responsible for the sins of all these people because his action prompted theirs. Therefore, according to the principle stated in a

[15] **Mishkaat Pg. 386, from the Musnad of Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah and Bayhaqi.**

hadith of Muslim, he will accrue the collective sins of all these people.

4. Having the intention of harming others: Every person participating in the kite-flying contest has the intention of cutting the line of others, thereby causing harm to them. Causing harm to a Muslim is a sin and both the one who cuts the string of another as well as the one whose string is cut are both sinful because each of them had the same intention.

5. Making one negligent of salaah and remembrance of Allaah: This is one of the reasons for which Allaah forbade gambling and liquor (refer to verse 91 of Surah Maa'idah).

6. Invading the privacy of others: People usually climb on rooftops to fly their kites, thereby disturbing their neighbours by invading their privacy.

7. Risking one's life and health: Newspapers often report incidents of people falling off from roofs when flying kite, causing loss to life and serious bodily harm. One also hears reports of road accidents taking place when kite-flyers become a hazard to passing traffic. Besides the reports that feature in the newspapers, there are still many more that never reach the press. It is illogical to refer to anything as a form of recreation when it leads to loss of human lives. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has been so compassionate towards his Ummah that he even forbade people from sleeping on roofs that have no fences or walls[16] because the danger exists that a person may accidentally fall down when he suddenly awakens from his sleep and begins to walk away. If this has been forbidden in the Ahadeeth, why should kite-flying not be forbidden when it presents the same danger?

8. A waste of money: Hundreds of thousands are wasted in kite-flying festivities. Besides the exorbitant cost of kites and string, money is unnecessarily wasted on food, audio equipment, lighting and other festive trimmings.

---

[16] **Mishkaat Pg. 404, from Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi.**

9. Other sins: Besides the evils mentioned above, the kite-flying contests hosted nowadays also feature chanting on loudspeakers, music and intermingling of sexes. Each of these acts are sins in themselves. Therefore, how can one question the prohibition of an act that includes all of these sins?

10. Based on the above evils associated with kite-flying contests, the Fuqahaa have prohibited it. Therefore, flying kite, taking the kite of another person, selling kites, buying kites, etc are all forbidden. In fact, people earning a living from the kite trade have to search for another occupation that will provide them a lawful income. {Fataawaa Jaami'ah Daarul Uloom Karachi, Vol. 34 Pg. 807}

NOTE: The above ruling applies to the kite-flying contests held nowadays that entail all of the above evils in no uncertain terms. In fact, these evils are being intensified all the time. However, if a child makes a kite out of coloured paper, attaches a string to it and flies it like a kite without the above mentioned associated evils, the act will be just like flying a balloon. Although there is no benefit in the act, the Shari'ah does not prohibit it for a small child.

Indoor Games

A) **CHESS**: As already mentioned, many Ahadeeth have prohibited playing chess and backgammon. It will therefore not be permissible to play these games.

B) **CARDS:** The Fuqahaa have also prohibited playing card games for the following reasons:

- These games involve the used of cards that have pictures on them.
- Gambling usually takes place in these games.
- Sinful and irreligious people usually play card games.
- People become too preoccupied with these games.
- Instead of providing relaxation, these games serve only to exhaust the mind.
- No purposeful objectives are achieved from card games.

G) **SCRABBLE:** This game entails forming words from letters and is beneficial as an educational aid. Gambling does not usually take place in this game and it is permissible to play it as long as the players do not become too preoccupied in the game, thereby neglecting more important duties.

H) **KAREMBOARD:** No harm is done by playing this game. However, it is not permissible to play this game if the players become so preoccupied that they neglect their Faraa'idh. If a person plays the game to relax and rejuvenate the mind and body, his playing is permissible as long as he abstains from everything else that is not permissible.

I) **LUDU:** The same rule applies to ludu as applies to karemboard. It is permissible to play the game as long as all other prohibitions are abstained from, such as the use of pictures of animate objects.

J) **VIDEO GAMES:** These games have fast captured a large audience and are of various categories:

I. Those games that only feature pictures of inanimate objects like flying helicopters and aeroplanes, driving cars and motorcycles

or navigating ships, etc. These also include those game in which these inanimate objects are one's target and those games in which there are only pictures of animate objects that are so vague that they cannot really be referred to as animate objects; e.g. they are merely silhouettes without any eyes, nose, ears and other distinct features. In the above cases, one is permitted to play these games as a form of recreation and to sharpen one's wits. Of course, the following restrictions must be adhered to:

- ♉ No gambling should take place.
- ♉ Salaah is not neglected.
- ♉ The rights of people are not trampled upon.
- ♉ It does not hamper more important duties like one's education.
- ♉ Money is not wasted.
- ♉ One does not become preoccupied in the games.
- ♉ There is no music played in the game.

VIII. The other category of video games are those that feature pictures of animate beings. These games are prohibited because of these pictures, especially when these games:

- ♉ Remove the abomination of pictures from one's heart.
- ♉ Cause one to neglect salaah.
- ♉ Adversely affect fulfilling the rights of others and tending to important duties like education, etc.
- ♉ Cause one to be wasteful and become preoccupied

Apart from the above, these games tend to be an obstacle for important duties like education and exhaust a person's mind rather than provide relaxation for the mind.

Some Other Contemporary Forms of Recreation

To pass time, there are many forms of recreation in vogue which, when viewed in the light of the Qur'aan, the Ahadeeth and common sense, prove to be destructive instead of being constructive.

Listening to Music

Not only is it permissible to recite and listen to beneficial poetry as a recreational activity, but even the Sahaabah (R.A) and our pious predecessors carried out this practice. However, the Shari'ah has vehemently opposed the use of musical instruments and listening to the voices of non-Mahram women. This is Haraam.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) stated, "Allaah has sent me as a mercy and a guide to the Mu'mineen, and Allaah has commanded me to destroy all wind and stringed musical instruments, the cross and the customs of the period of ignorance."[17]

Bukhari narrates that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "A group of my Ummah will attempt to legalise adultery, wearing of silk (by men), liquor and musical instruments."[18]

The Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) is also reported to have said, "Music grows hypocrisy in the heart just as rain grows crops."[19]

The once Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R) has penned a detailed treatise about music in his great Arabic work Ahkaamul Qur'aan. The treatise has been translated into Urdu and, with

---

[17] **Vol. 3 Pg. 208 of Ahkaamul Qur'aan of Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R), quoting from Abu Dawood Tayaalisi (A.R).**

[18] **Vol. 3 Pg. 208 of Ahkaamul Qur'aan of Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R).**

[19] **Islaam and Music (Urdu) Pg. 148, quoting from Bayhaqi and Abu Dawood.**

further explanation, has been printed under the title of "Islaam and Music". Refer to this book for further details.

Art

Islaam has forbidden drawing pictures of animate beings because Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has sternly condemned it in the following Ahadeeth:

I. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "People who make pictures will be most severely punished on the Day of Qiyaamah." {Bukhari; Fit'hul Baari Vol. 10 Pg. 314}

II. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "On the Day of Qiyaamah, those who made pictures will be severely punished and they will be told, 'Give life to the pictures you made!" {Ibid, Pg. 316}

III. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) mentioned quoted Allaah as saying, "Who can be more unjust than the person who tries to create like Me (by drawing pictures of animate creatures)? Let him create a seed or an atom if he can!" {Ibid}

IV. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has also stated, "Whoever made a picture in this world will be commanded on the Day of Qiyaamah to instil life into the picture, which he will never be able to do (due to which he will be severely punished)." {Ibid, Pg. 323}

V. Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) narrates that once when Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) was out on a journey, she hung up a curtain across a shelf. The curtain happened to be decorated with pictures of animate beings so when Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) saw it, he tore it up saying, "Those who try to imitate Allaah's creative powers will be most severely punished on the Day of Qiyaamah." Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) further stated that she then made one or two pillows out of the curtain. {Ibid Pg. 318}

Hadhrat Mufti Shafee (A.R) has written a detailed treatise regarding the status of pictures in Islaam and has included many Ahadeeth and injunctions therein. He has also cleared many doubts and answered

many questions. The treatise is well worth studying. We will presently mention some of the injunctions contained therein.

Some Injunctions of the Shari'ah Concerning Pictures

1. Painting or drawing pictures of animate beings are not permissible in any circumstances. It is only permissible to draw pictures of inanimate objects. {Pg. 46}
2. Just as it is not permissible to draw pictures by hand, it is also not permissible to take photographs or to print pictures with any machine. {Pg. 61}

   Because of the compulsion, it is permissible to have photographs taken for one's passport and identification document. {Pg. 71}

Thus far, we have mentioned the injunction regarding drawing and taking pictures. With regard to pictures that have already been made, only the following types of pictures are permissible:

1. Pictures of animate beings when the heads have been cut off so that they only resemble trees.
2. Pictures of animate beings when the pictures are trampled upon like when they are on carpets.
3. Extremely small pictures on animate objects like those on rings or buttons, which are just like embroidery.
4. Certain Fuqahaa have stated that it is permissible for immature children to play with toys that have pictures of animate beings {Pg. 47}. However, if one fears that a child will lose the abomination for pictures by playing with such toys, it will be best to refrain from even these toys.

NOTE: The extent to which photos are taken at wedding ceremonies and at other functions is a cause of great concern for every Muslim. Besides being a Haraam act, it brings dishonour to women and converts them into parading models. This practice is also a flagrant violation of Allaah's commands. It is lamentable that even the religious members of a family turn a blind eye to this sin, thereby lending momentum to the same. It is the religious duty of the conscious members of the family to stop this Haraam act in an amicable manner.

Watching Films

Movies are a medley of the many major sins listed below:

1. Picture-making. This is Haraam, as has become clear from the Ahadeeth quoted earlier.
2. Music. This is also Haraam as discussed earlier.
3. Singing and dancing. There can be no doubt about this being Haraam.
4. Looking at non-Mahram members of the opposite sex. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has cursed the one who looks as well as the one who is looked at.[20]
5. Intermingling of sexes.
6. Being witness to immoral behaviour. When even spreading immorality is a grave sin, one can well imagine the gravity of portraying it. Allaah says in Surah Noor, **"There shall be an excruciating punishment in this world and in the Aakhirat (Hereafter) for those who love immorality to spread amongst the believers. Allaah knows and you do not know."** {Surah 24, verse 19}
7. Creating a sinful mentality. Movies corrupt the minds of the new generation and it is no secret that they are responsible for the tides of vice that are sweeping through society.

These are merely a few evils prevalent in films. In reality, every aspect of a movie is full of sin from beginning to end. May Allaah save our future generations from the destructive consequences of motion pictures. Aameen.

Stage Drama

The only difference between theatrical dramas and movies is that movies are a representation of pictures while theatrical shows are the

---

[20] **Mishkaat Pg. 270**

performances of live actors. Therefore, although stage dramas will not entail the sin of picture-making, they still include all the other sins that are found in movies.

In Short

A brief analysis of many contemporary sports has passed together with several forms of recreation in vogue nowadays. Apart from this, the following has been made clear from the Qur'aanic Aayaat and Ahadeeth that have passed at the beginning:

A) Every second of life must be valued and a person should utilise his time in the correct manner.
B) There is no justification for making any sport or form of recreation the object of one’s life. By doing this on an individual or collective basis, one will be inviting destruction in this world as well as in the Aakhirat (Hereafter).
C) Islaam detests laziness and lethargy and encourages people to be active, energetic and cheerful. Therefore, the Shari'ah permits all forms of recreation that conform to its restrictions, are purposeful and which are not regarded as the object of one’s life.
D) One should endeavour to practise those forms of recreation that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) encouraged and which are useful in Jihaad and in fulfilling the rights due to others.

May Allaah allow us to practise on the teachings of Deen in every aspect of our lives and to consistently carry out good deeds with good health, safety and vigour. In this way we will be able to easily complete our journey in this world and successfully reach our final destination to the Aakhirat (Hereafter). Aameen.

Mahmood Ashraf Uthmaani
15 Rabee’ul Awwal 1413 A.H.
14 September 1992

NOTE: This Fatwa has been endorsed by Hadhrat Mufti Rafee Uthmaani (Daamat Barakaatuh) on 13 Rabee’ul Aakhir 1413 A.H. and Hadhrat Mufti Muhammed Taqi Uthmaani (Daamat Barakaatuh) on 3 Rabee’ul Awwal 1414 A.H.

Translation Edited by :
Mufti Afzal Hoosen Elias

E-mail address : muftie@mweb.co.za

Telephone number: (011) 423 1072

Fax number : (011) 423 1072